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*****T O P S E C R E T*****

DATE 12-18-74

WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

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MESSAGE ANNOTATIONS:

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MESSAGE:

State Dept. review
completed

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TO THE WHITE HOUSE

FM PEKING 91 (BUSH)

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

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PEKING 91

NOVEMBER 18, 1974

TO: THE SECRETARY

FROM: GEORGE BUSH

SUBJECT: CHINA'S INTERNAL SCENE ON THE EVE OF YOUR VISIT

1. IN HOPES THAT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO YOU, WE HAVE PREPARED THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF CHINA'S INTERNAL SCENE ON THE EVE OF YOUR VISIT, AS IT LOOKS TO US IN PEKING.

2. THE IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN WHICH WAS JUST GATHERING STEAM AT THE TIME OF YOUR LAST VISIT NOW SEEMS TO BE DRAWING TO A CLOSE. ALMOST IDENTICAL REPORTS FROM THREE CITIES IN CHINA DESCRIBE A RECENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE DIRECTIVE WHICH QUOTE NO LESS THAN CHAIRMAN MAO AS SAYING THAT EIGHT YEARS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IS ENOUGH. IT APPEARS THAT A NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS COULD BE CONVENED AT ANY TIME, A STEP WHICH WOULD MARK FURTHER MOVEMENT TOWARD THE CREATION OF A LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE TO TAKE CHINA INTO THE ANTICIPATED SUCCESSION PERIOD. MAO TSE-TUNG CONTINUES TO REMAIN OUTSIDE PEKING, HOWEVER, AND HAS NOW BEEN GONE AT LEAST FOUR MONTHS, A FACT WHICH INJECTS SOME UNCERTAINTY INTO ANY PROJECTION OF PRC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. MAO'S RETURN TO PEKING COULD, AS HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST, SIGNAL ENTIRELY NEW DIRECTIONS IN CHINESE POLICY, ALTHOUGH THIS DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY.

3. WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE RECENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN? IN OUR VIEW, A VARIETY OF ISSUES, ALL PARTS OF WHICH IS PERHAPS MAO'S LAST EFFORT TO SHAPE CHINA IN HIS IMAGE, WERE AT STAKE. THEY INCLUDE THE ROLE OF CHINA'S MILITARY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARTY, THE DEGREE OF CENTRAL CONTROL OVER CHINA'S MASSIVE REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL BUREAUCRACIES, THE MIDDLE KINGDOM'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BARBARIAN STATES, MOST IMPORTANTLY THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, A GENUINE EFFORT TO ERADICATE TRADITIONAL, CONFUCIAN THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR PATTERNS AMONG THE CHINESE PEOPLE. WHILE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MEASURE WITH ANYTHING

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MESSAGE (CONTINUED):

LIKE PRECISION THE REGIME'S SUCCESS IN RESOLVING THESE ISSUES, WE SUSPECT THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN MIXED AT BEST AND MANY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPROMISED BUT NOT SOLVED.

4. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE MILITARY FIELD. EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN EIGHT OF CHINA'S ELEVEN REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS WERE WRNCHED LOOSE FROM THEIR LONG STANDING POWER BASES IN A MASSIVE SHIFT THE IMPACT OF WHICH REMAINS UNCLEAR. WHEREAS THEY PREVIOUSLY HAD OCCUPIED BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL POSITIONS, USUALLY AS PROVINCIAL PARTY FIRST SECRETARY, MOST HAVE NOW BEEN STRIPPED OF THEIR POLITICAL FUNCTIONS. THE APPARENT DEBATE OVER MILITARY PRIORITIES AND STRATEGY ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF THE MAOIST POSITION STRESSING CONVENTIONAL OVER NUCLEAR PREPAREDNESS, AND IN ADDITION EMPHASIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVER MASSIVE MILITARY BUDGETS. IN OUR JUDGMENT, HOWEVER, THESE ISSUES, WHILE RESOLVED FOR THE PRESENT, WILL CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR FOCUS OF DEBATE AS CHINA MOVES INTO THE UNCERTAIN PERIOD OF SUCCESSION.

THAT THE ISSUE OF CENTRAL VERSUS LOCAL CONTROL REMAINS UNRESOLVED WAS ILLUSTRATED BY SERIES OF AUTHORITATIVE ARTICLES IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF RED FLAG. IMPLICIT IN THE ARTICLES WAS ALLEGATION THAT PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAD SUBSTITUTED THEIR AUTHORITY FOR THAT OF THE PARTY CENTRAL, AND ONCE AGAIN THE ROLE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES IS IN SOME DOUBT. THE PROBLEM OF CREATING A GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE IN CHINA WHICH IS RESPONSIVE TO PEKING'S AUTHORITY, A PROBLEM AS OLD AS CHINA, REMAINS UNSOLVED.

THE DEBATE OVER CHINA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WEST WAS EXPRESSED IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE THROUGH THE POLEMICS OVER THE NATONIONI FILM AND THE ATTACKS ON WESTERN MUSIC. IN THE FIELDS OF COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY, THE DEBATE HAS CENTERED ON SELF RELIANCE AS OPPOSED TO THE IMPORT OF FOREIGN GOODS AND ADVANCED TECHNIQUES. THE PROBLEM IN BOTH CASES IS TO WHAT EXTENT CAN CHINA MOVE INTO THE MODERN WORLD AND WIDENED CONTACTS WITH THE WEST WITHOUT ITS PEOPLE BEING OVERWHELMED BY OUTSIDE INFLUENCES. WE SUSPECT THAT IN THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE A COMPROMISE POSITION HAS BEEN REACHED WHICH, FOR THE PRESENT AT LEAST, HAS SATISFIED CHINESE LEADERS THAT THEY CAN MOVE TOWARD GREATER CONTACT AND EXPOSURE TO THE WEST WHILE MAINTAINING THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE OF SELF RELIANCE AND A UNIQUELY REVOLUTIONARY-TINGED CHINESE CULTURE.

FINALLY, THE CENTERPIECE OF THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN, THE ATTACK ON CONFUCIUS AND THE WEIGHT OF TRADITIONAL THOUGHT ON THE CHINESE POPULACE HAS, IN OUR VIEW, HAD THE LEAST IMPACT OF ALL. WHILE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DOCUMENT, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION BASED ON OUR EXPOSURE TO THE CHINESE BUREAUCRACY

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MESSAGE (CONTINUED):

AND THE MAN ON THE STREET THAT LITTLE HAS CHANGED IN THE MIDDLE KINGDOM. MATERIALISM RATHER THAN REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY REMAINS THE MOST IMPORTANT IMPETUS IN CHINESE SOCIETY, WHICH ALSO RETAINS AN INNATE CONSERVATISM.

IN THE PROCESS OF ATTEMPTING THESE CHANGES AND REACHING A NEW CONSENSUS, HOWEVER, NEW TURMOIL AND UNCERTAINTY HAVE BEEN GENERATED IN CHINA. THE CALLS FOR STRUGGLE AND "GOING AGAINST THE TIDE" REOPENED OLD WOUNDS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND AROUSED THE AMBITIONS OF THOSE WHO ROSE TO POSITIONS OF POWER DURING THAT MOVEMENT ONLY TO BE RELEGATED TO OBSCURITY WHEN ORDER HAD TO BE RESTORED. NEW FACTIONAL FIGHTING AND POSTER ATTACKS REMINISCENT OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION ERUPTED DURING THE SPRING AND SUMMER, BUT WERE QUICKLY CURTAILED BY DIRECTIVES FROM THE CENTER. APPARENTLY IT WAS AGREED THAT CHINA COULD NOT AFFORD ANOTHER CULTURAL REVOLUTION AT THIS TIME. ALTHOUGH FACTIONAL DISPUTES AND POSTER ATTACKS CONTINUE, IT IS OUR ESTIMATE THAT THESE REPRESENT A MINORITY FIGHTING A FORLORN CAMPAIGN IN AN EFFORT TO REESTABLISH THE ROLE OF "MASS REPRESENTATIVES" CREATED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION.

AT THE CENTER, IT APPEARS THAT A MINIMUM CONSENSUS HAS BEEN REACHED ON THE BASIC ISSUES CONFRONTING CHINA. THE OVERRIDING SUCCESSION ISSUE HAS BOTH INTENSIFIED THE MANEUVERING FOR POWER AND REINFORCED THE IMPETUS FOR UNITY. TENG HSIAO-PING NOW SEEMS CLEARLY TO HAVE MOVED INTO THE ACTING PREMIER'S ROLE. THIS PLUS THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHIAO KUAN-HUA'S APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN MINISTER INDICATE THAT SOME BASIC ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED PROBABLY INCLUDING CHINA'S CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. OUR ASSUMPTIONS IN THIS REGARD ARE STRENGTHENED BY WHAT WE FEEL IS A KEDLY MORE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE IN OUR DEALINGS WITH OUR CHINESE HOSTS AT ALL LEVELS SINCE THE FALL OF THIS YEAR. YOUR VISIT WILL, OF COURSE, PROVIDE A MUCH CLEARER INSIGHT INTO THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN CHINA.

TO SUM UP, IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE DIRECTION OF CHINESE POLICY REMAINS VERY MUCH IN THE HANDS OF THE SAME ESTABLISHMENT WHICH FIRST DECIDED TO PERMIT THE OPENING OF THE PRESENT U.S.-PRC RELATIONSHIP, EVEN IF THE ACTIVE CAST OF CHARACTERS WITHIN THIS ESTABLISHMENT HAS CHANGED SOMEWHAT. CHINESE ACTIONS, BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL, ALSO REMAIN ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED EVEN IF THEY ARE PORTRAYED FOR PURPOSES OF GAINING THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT IN MORE RADICAL OR "REVOLUTIONARY" TERMS. DOMESTICALLY, ATTENTION IS FOCUSED UPON BUILDING UP THE NATIONAL ECONOMY WHILE MAINTAINING A SUFFICIENT DEGREE OF POLITICAL UNITY TO TAKE THE COUNTRY THROUGH A TRANSITION IN LEADERSHIP. IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS CHINA IS FOLLOWING AN ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY (DESPITE THE ATTACKS

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MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

ON SUPERPOWER HEGEMONISM AND SUPPORT FOR THE THIRD WORLD) WHICH DOES
NOT COMMIT THE COUNTRY TO ANY INITIATIVE NOT IMMEDIATELY LINKED TO
CHINA'S OWN NATIONAL INTEREST.

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